

Remarks

The applicant appreciates the examiner's consideration of the application and prior art, and requests reconsideration and allowance based on the preceding amendments and these remarks.

Filed herewith is a terminal disclaimer regarding both U.S. Patent No. 6,021,417 and Patent Application Serial No. 09/447,962. This terminal disclaimer overcomes the rejection set forth in sections 3 through 7 of the office action.

The examiner rejected most of the claims as obvious over several combinations of references as set forth in sections 6 through 18 of the office action. The applicant submits that the claims as amended are clearly allowable over the references.

As a start, the applicant notes that independent claim 27 was not rejected for obviousness. As the double patenting rejection of claim 27 has been obviated by the filing of the enclosed terminal disclaimer, claim 27 should be allowed.

Independent claim 1 was rejected as obvious over Blank in view of Itoh and separately as obvious over Cohen. Independent claim 14 was rejected as obvious over Cohen and separately rejected as obvious over the combination of Blank in view of Itoh as applied to 21, and further in view of Mizutani.

Claims 1 and 14 are clearly patentable in light of the references. Both such claims have been amended to recite that the selection of the portions of the image, and the displaying of such portions in sequence, is accomplished automatically. Further, at least a plurality of the portions each include a plurality of pixels that are proximate to one another, and thus together form a contiguous portion of the image display.

The references do not disclose or suggest the combination of elements of either of claims 1 or 14. Blank is an image editing system that allows the user to select one or more objects in an image and recolor them. Itoh is a coloring methodology in which a pointer such as a mouse or stylus is used to select areas to be re-colored.

Although the applicant disagrees with the examiner's conclusion that it would have been obvious to combine the references, it is apparent that the references, even as combined by the examiner, do not disclose all of the elements of claims 1 or 14. In the claimed method and system, the selection of the portions and the display of the portions in the sequence is accomplished automatically. In contrast, in the references the user must select the area to be colored or re-colored. Thus, in the Blank and Itoh references neither step accomplished automatically. Also, the references do not disclose the selection of separate portions of image according to a sequence, and then displaying the textures for the portions in that sequence.

Cohen is a method of simulating pictures for young children in which portions of the picture are displayed one at a time in response to an action taken by the user, such as a key press or the movement of an input device. Nothing in Cohen discloses or suggests automatic selection of separate portions of a stored image according to a sequence, nor the automatic display of those portions in the sequence. Rather, as set forth in column 5, lines 55 through 58 and element a of claim 1 in Cohen, both the portions to be displayed and the sequence of display is predetermined by the computer, and the computer takes the action in response to a user input. There is thus no suggestion of selection of portions according to a sequence, nor automatic selection, nor automatic display in the sequence.

For the foregoing reasons, each of the independent claims is allowable.

Additional amendments have been made to some of the dependent claims to resolve typographical errors and to keep the claims consistent with the independent claims. Although those dependent claims add further features that are in and of themselves patentable in combination with the claims from which they depend, applicant will not address such patentability arguments in order to focus the response on the independent claims. However, the applicant reserves the right to specifically address features of the dependent claims if and when such becomes necessary.

If for any reason this response seems incomplete, or if a conversation might help advance prosecution, please call the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,



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